



USDA Registry for Cotton Merchants

Overview

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) maintains an internal-use-only national registry to help cotton merchants efficiently redeem cotton held as collateral by USDA.

Background

Cotton producers may pledge as collateral harvested cotton for Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) marketing assistance loans. These producers often authorize merchants to repay their loan obligations and redeem the cotton using form CCC-605, "Designation of Agent -- Cotton," which the cotton merchants mail or fax to one of the 300 FSA county offices that process cotton loans.

FSA county offices require an original FSA-237, "Facsimile Signature Authorization and Verification," for each signature appearing on form CCC-605 submitted by cotton merchants. The FSA-237 provides both an original signature and authorization by the signing individual for FSA to accept documents bearing the individual's faxed signature.

Through the registry, a cotton merchant may submit to FSA headquarters one FSA-237 that may be accessed by all FSA county offices.

Registry Content and Use

FSA's Price Support Division (PSD) in Washington, D.C., will enter on the registry an image of the cotton merchant's original signature from a submitted FSA-237. The registry, viewable only by FSA employees, contains:

- The name and address of the cotton merchant;
- The name of each individual authorized by the merchant to sign form CCC-605;
- An image of the authorized individual's signature;
- A notation as to whether sample impressed signature has been submitted; and
- The effective date of authorization and, if applicable, the termination date.

Once a name and signature are included on the registry, it is available nationwide to all FSA county offices. Merchants will then be able to fax requests to redeem cotton to an individual FSA county office without having to submit their original signature to each FSA county office that processes cotton redemptions. FSA staff accesses the registry to determine whether the individual signing the CCC-605 is authorized by the merchant to sign the CCC-605 on behalf of the merchant. FSA updates the registry on a daily basis.

Note: Because faxed CCC-605s contain producer's signatures, form FSA-237 must be on file in the FSA county office for such producer before the faxed CCC-605 can be processed.

Registry Participation

Only merchants that redeem cotton loan collateral using form CCC-605 may submit names for listing on this registry.

The registry is not for use by individual producers. Producers must continue to submit FSA-237s to their FSA county office, which will fax it to other counties or loan servicing agents as needed by the producer.

Registry Benefits

The registry:

- Eliminates the need for merchants to provide original signatures on FSA-237s to multiple FSA county offices, or samples of impressed signatures to multiple FSA State offices; and
- Reduces paperwork for both cotton merchants and the government.

How to Sign Up

To have an individual listed on the registry, a merchant must submit the following to PSD:

- A letter identifying the individual(s) authorized to sign the CCC-605; and
- An original FSA-237 for each authorized individual. Available at FSA county offices, FSA-237s must bear an original signature that has been witnessed by an FSA employee or notarized. (It is not necessary to enter an individual's ID number in Item #2 of the form.)

original FSA-237s to each county office as needed. However, new sample impressed signatures must be submitted to PSD and not to FSA State offices.

For More Information

For more information on this registry service, please contact PSD at (202) 720-2879 or by e-mail at sylvia.redd@wdc.usda.gov

Merchants must send the authorizing letter, form FSA-237, and any new samples of impressed signatures to the following address:

By express mail only*:
USDA/FSA/PSD
Attention: Signature Registry
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Stop 0512 – Room 4095
Washington, D.C. 20250-0512

By commercial or Postal Service parcel delivery:
USDA/FSA/PSD
Attention: Signature Registry
Room 4095, South Building
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

*Because first-class mail addressed to PSD may be significantly delayed, use of express mail or commercial parcel delivery is recommended to assure timely receipt of submissions.

Registry is Voluntary

Use of this registry is voluntary. Merchants may continue to submit

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